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A DISCOURSE
ON
NATIONAL FASTS,

Particularly in reference to that of

APRIL 19, 1793,

ON OCCASION OF THE
WAR against FRANCE.

By W. FOX. *K*

THE THIRD EDITION.

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A DISCOURSE

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Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the hand of wickedness; ye shall not fast as ye do this day—Is not this the fast which I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every Yoke?—Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.—Isaiah.

OF all the wonderful absurdities which the history of man presents to our view, perhaps, there is none so extraordinary as the associating of religious rites with those criminal purposes to which we should imagine the rudest and simplest ideas of religion must be inimical. *Adam*, when he first transgressed against his maker, very naturally hid himself amongst the trees of the garden: but his more profligate posterity, hardened in guilt, when associated together to commit any crime of peculiar enormity, and extensive mischief, boldly rush into his presence, claim him as a partner in their guilt, and demand his assistance in perpetrating their crimes.

One would naturally imagine, that when men were determined to give a loose to their criminal passions, they might be satisfied with immolating their fellow-creatures, by thousands, and by millions, at the shrine of their ambition, their cruelty, or their avarice. And we may surely ask why they should wantonly and unnecessarily insult their maker?—If we have the candour to suppose, that they do not believe there exists any supreme being, whom they can insult by thus profaning his name. If we admit that they consider religion as a mere political engine. Yet may we not ask, whether it be not degrading the State to dress it out in the tattered remnants of a religion which is despised? we may give to our crimes a factitious glare. *Captain Macbeath* is not so despicable a character as *Mother Cole*. Let it then be considered whether it be not more becoming the character of men to give to our crimes the manly boldness of the former character, than, with the latter, to form an unnatural compound of vice and religion.

The history of this degradation of the human character might not be unamusing, were not its wickedness too extreme, and its impiety too shocking. It must be

observed that, though this association of religion and vice is to be too extensively traced in the history of man, yet in some cases, something may be offered in its extenuation. That in a rude state of society, the druids should, by their religious orgies, maintain an authority and influence over mankind was not very extraordinary; and the fraud might possibly not be injurious, at a period when there existed nothing that bore any resemblance to civil government, and when kings were merely leaders of armies. Nor need we much wonder that the Roman emperors combined the priesthood with the imperial dignity; *they* might with great propriety be considered as the representatives of the deities *they* acknowledged: plunder and carnage might properly be conducted under *their* auspices.

It is in assuming the religion of *Christ* for such a purpose, that human depravity becomes peculiarly manifested; for, were it deemed expedient to associate the black catalogue of human crimes with religion, one would have thought that the Christian religion would hardly have been selected for such a purpose. *Mahommed* had the good sense to perceive its unfitness for a national religion, and therefore he altered and adapted it for that purpose. The church of Rome have adopted a plan nearly similar, by concealing the nature and import of the scripture from the people, and thereby have avoided shocking the feelings of mankind, by promulgating a religion totally incompatible with their avowed principles of conduct. Bishop *Burnet* observes, "*That the reformed churches have added new abuses to the old ones,*" and adds, "*That growing atheism and impiety is daily gaining ground, not only among us, but indeed all Europe over.*" Certainly measures have been adopted since the reformation, which seem extremely well adapted to such an end.

To promulgate amongst the people a religion against which every national act militates; to be continually at war, yet profess the gospel of peace; to be ranging round the world to spread, misery, desolation, famine and war; yet to place before us the example of him who went about doing good. To have the same government and legislature, who are perpetrating those deeds,

enacting penal laws to compel a profession of a belief in the very religion that condemns them, are certainly admirable contrivances to destroy every religious, and every moral principle. Nor, is it less observable that, because *Jesus* has declared that his kingdom is not of this world, it is determined that it shall be of this world; because he has told us, that his disciples shall be hated for his name sake, they therefore enact penalties to compel them to profess their belief in him; as we are informed by him, that his church shall consist of a remnant, chosen out of all nations, and tongues, and people, with infinite propriety, it is made to consist of whole nations; and, to finish the picture, because *Jesus* has proclaimed himself to be the head over all things to his church, the *king* is proclaimed to be the head of it.

If in this character his *majesty* issues a proclamation, and if in this view we obey it, certainly then it will not be easy for us to discover a more effectual mode of manifesting that we obey him, not as an earthly monarch, but, as seated on the throne of *Jehovah*, than by a national fast: because, (except circumcision) national fasts constitute the most prominent feature in that œconomy wherein *God* condescended to become the head of a national church. When that institution was dissolved, by the authority that formed it, no method could be contrived more conveniently to prove our contempt of that authority, than by continuing the observances of that institution. This method of trampling on the divine authority was very early resorted to; the mystery of iniquity began to work even in the apostles time; it was then contended that the *Gentiles* should be circumcised, and keep the law. *Paul's* judgment on this subject was indeed somewhat different, for he tells the *Galatians* “*If they were circumcised Christ should profit them nothing*” yet had circumcision divine sanction, and *Paul* himself circumcised *Timothy*: but to observe divine institutions otherwise than as *God* has appointed is as criminal as introducing human inventions. To add to or to diminish his commands are equally rebellion against him. Hence to observe any fast otherwise than as we are authorised by *Christ*, or his apostles

is to trample under foot that gospel which has been promulgated to man, as the source of his eternal hope.

A *Christian* must not merely decline joining in a fast, but even start with horror at the thought, from the consideration that amidst all the corruptions with which the national professions of christianity abound, fasting is that subject which has been peculiarly selected by them to be placed in the most farcical point of view, and to degrade, and to insult not only religion and morality, but the common sense and language of mankind. When the nations of *Europe* became what is called *Christian*, the conductors of the business had some difficulties to combat. To adopt intire a religion they did not believe, and which they only resorted to for interested purposes, could hardly be expected. And as the religion already existed, they were not at liberty to frame it *de novo*, they were therefore necessitated to re-organize it: but as the original was not extremely well adapted to the purposes to which it was to be applied, the transmutation was not very easy.

Fasting was a remarkable instance of the adroitness with which the affair was conducted. It was a term of very obvious import, even to the most illiterate; it could not possibly mean any thing but abstinence from food: so it has invariably been understood by mahommedans, and by every people who practise it, and who believe the religion they profess. To change this obvious meaning, one would have thought, would have been impossible; yet was this indispensibly necessary. Abstinence from food could hardly be expected, from Kings, and Emperors, Popes and Cardinals, it was therefore boldly resolved, that fasting should mean feasting on the most delicate viands, in distinction from common and ordinary food; and thus fasting was by this notable expedient rendered perfectly palatable even to an epicure; and when we recollect that this curious definition of fasting has, like the English constitution, been framed by the deliberative wisdom of our ancestors, transmitted through a succession of ages, and sanctioned by happy experience; if any bold innovator should dare to intimate, that oysters, eels, dories, and cray fish, are not peculiarly adapted

to fasting and mortification; it may be hoped that we shall still preserve our reverence for antiquity, and carefully guard our minds from being corrupted, by the detestable innovations of reason and philosophy.

Despicably extravagant as this mummary may be, yet such is the influence of bad principles, that modes of fasting not much inferior in absurdity have been adopted, by persons who appear to have some reverence for the gospel of *Christ*. Thus, some call it a fast day to delay their breakfast a few hours, some omit a meal, others eat nothing till dinner, while others have only a slight repast in the day, delaying their principal meal to the evening. As such modes of fasting are the result of whim and caprice, it is no wonder they are so diversified; and, if they are deemed fasting, it can only be because the usual mode of feeding is gluttony. The most abstemious of these methods of fasting correspond with the regular manner of living in other countries; the Romans, and many other nations, partook not of any substantial meal until the evening.

As the methods of fasting are thus diversified, so some have an ingenious method of keeping the national fast without fasting at all. They will, indeed, go to church, or meeting, and thus the ceremony ends. But Dr. Price's mode of keeping the royal fasts, during the *American* war, was still more curious. The Doctor punctually kept them, but used to make a small mistake, for, instead of praying for the success of his majesty's arms, he used to deprecate and deplore it as an impending calamity. Viewing it in that light, it would certainly have been highly criminal in him to have observed it in any other manner: but why observe it at all?

Obedience to the government under which we live is a duty strongly inculcated in the scriptures, and it ever justly claims our regard, except when it trenches on the superior duty we owe to God. Hence, it may be inferred, that it is not the proper office of the civil magistrate to determine when, or how, man should worship his maker, and that he cannot assume the office without invading the prerogatives of the Lord of the whole earth, so it should seem that we cannot, in any shape, or in any degree, obey such commands without recog-

nizing that assumed authority, and thereby rebelling against heaven.

The peculiar nature of christianity is totally repugnant to a combination of religion with national contests. As men, living in the world, we cannot but have our political opinions, and by those opinions we must be governed when our duty calls on us to take a part in the affairs of this world. But the minds of Christians will be far otherwise employed whenever they approach the awful presence of *Jehovah*. It is true, since praying has become an art, and practised as a trade, much ingenuity has been discovered in inventing topics for prayer. But numerous as are the passages, in the epistles of the apostles, where prayer is mentioned, yet they uniformly refer to spiritual blessings, or to those miraculous and peculiar circumstances appropriate to those times. When *Paul* prayed, night and day for the *Thessalonians*, it was that they might increase and abound in love, and might be unblameable in holiness before God; and when Christians were commanded to pray for kings, and all in authority: it was that they might live quiet and peaceable lives, in godliness and honesty. And if they asked for food, it was only as daily bread, which, by supporting that life which had been forfeited by their transgressions, was a continual manifestation of the divine long suffering towards them. If then *Christian* prayer be thus limited, prophane in the extreme must it be for us to apply to heaven that our favorite army may destroy the adverse one. It must, even supposing we were thoroughly acquainted with the merits of the dispute, and the purpose meant to be effected, and were satisfied that those disputes, and that purpose, were perfectly consonant to the commonly received law of nations, which certainly bears no great resemblance to the law of *Christ*. To return good for evil; forgive injuries; do good to all men; form no very prominent feature in it. The principal object of *Grotius*, is to shew from whence wars may lawfully originate, but the New Testament is extremely defective in this respect as it gives us no idea of a *just* war; it even speaks of all war as arising from our lusts.

But it is very remarkable, that in the present war

we are perfect strangers to its purpose. In former wars, though the people were never in the secret of their real object, and consequently while they were telling God a war was just and necessary for a purpose, which was avowed, government was prosecuting it for one totally different. Yet, this must be admitted, that a specific object was always held out. A nation was to be weakened, because it was strong; or it was to be destroyed because it was weak. Another was to be divided, and another was to have a barrier. One to be attacked, because they had the assurance to say they had not injured us; and another, because we imagined they would resent the injuries we had done them. Some nations we attacked, because they made treaties we did not like; and others, because the treaties we made for them they did not choose to adopt. Sometimes we were informed, a country would be of use to us, and therefore we must seize it; and then we must seize another, because without it the first would be useless. Some wars were engaged in to protect our piracies, and our smugglers; one to aggrandise our colonies, and then another to weaken them. But in the present war, we are perfect strangers to the object it is to obtain. Mr. *Burke* says, we ought to be so. Admit it. Yet surely then we ought not to be called on to pray for success on his majesty's arms, without knowing how they are to be employed; and to assure God that their object is perfectly just, and necessary, while we are ignorant of what that object is. All we can possibly know is, that five thousand men, from *England*, are to be joined to sixteen thousand more, which the king of *England* has hired of the elector of *Hanover*; and that these men are to be employed somewhere in killing their fellow-creatures. This is the sum total of our knowledge on this business. But this circumstance certainly possesses one advantage; for, as nobody knows how his majesty's arms are to be employed, every body may suppose they are to be employed to his own mind, and every body is left at liberty to assert, as it suits his purpose at the time to contend they ought to be employed. Hence, any man might have asserted, that they were only to have been employed in protecting *Holland*, and the *Scheldt*; and

and two months since he could not have been contradicted. Then, it might have been asserted, they were to secure *Flanders*, as a barrier for *Holland*. When that was effected, it might be pretended, we were only to deprive them of their other conquests, as Mr. *Pitt* had declared that it was not intended to meddle with the internal affairs of *France*. But as she will probably have abandoned her remaining trifling acquisitions, before the fast shall have taken place, it will then evidently follow that the success we pray for, and the object of that war which we shall then tell God, is both just and necessary; is, not that which Mr. *Pitt* declared to be the object, but that which he expressly disclaimed—an interference with the internal affairs of *France*. In such case, it must be inferred that Mr. *Pitt* is not in the secret of the present measures, and that he has not their conduct and control; or, that he said the thing that was not. In the first moment in which the foreign armies enter the territories of *France*, it will be for him to come forward, and explain his tremendously ambiguous expression of “*pushing France at all parts* :” but, alas! nothing will be explained but by the event. The authors of this tragedy know how to conduct the plot too well, to suffer the *denouement* to be discovered till towards the conclusion of the piece. Is *France* and *Poland*, and every country where principles of liberty may dawn, and which may endanger surrounding despotisms, to be dismembered? If so, *England* must be included: from her have emanated those principles, and never can the despotism of *Europe* be secure while there they are suffered to remain. It will not be sufficient even to restore the antient despotism of *France*. Governments must be formed both there and here, in comparison of which the former despotism of *France* was liberty itself. For, let it be recollected, that from the art of printing, all the evils which are now deplored have resulted; and if that art be not totally annihilated, if it be suffered to exist even in that limited state which it did in *France*, all those consequences which have already resulted from it will again recur. But, if the continental princes should be able, with our assistance, effectually to subjugate *France*, the whole plan may be easily executed.

Conceited indeed, must be that *Englishman*, who imagines that this country would, in such case, be able to resist the confederacy.

If then printing be totally and effectually put a stop to—If by a general alliance amongst the sovereigns of Europe, which this war, if successful, seems well-adapted to produce, they agree to have large, well paid, and well trained armies, not to be stationed in their native lands, but in those, to the language of which they are strangers; and those armies to be mutually removed from country to country, to prevent their being connected with the natives; then, and only then, can this plan be effected. Thus, and thus only, can the despotism of *Europe* be rendered permanent. If a trait of liberty, if even *semi-despotism* be suffered to exist in any one country, that country will become a germinating seed, from whence will again spring up all these mischiefs which we now deplore; and all our laudable exertions will terminate, in producing only these subordinate and trivial evils, the loss of millions of lives, and the spreading misery and desolation around us. The power and limits of *France* are trivial circumstances; and Mr. *Burke*, with great propriety, urges us to *wage eternal war*, or to *extirpate*. But war cannot be *eternal*; it must then terminate in extirpation, and that extirpation must be extended as far as the slenderest fibre of liberty can be traced. If this be not the plan, it is childish in the extreme—if it be—But I am silent—because my knowledge of language is inadequate to the task of combining appropriate expressions to convey my feelings. If indeed it were to be supposed possible, that the confederacy against *France* should finally and fatally prevail, and if it were lawful to approach the Divine Being respecting the events of a transitory world: In contemplation of the threatened horrors we should throw ourselves at his feet, trembling in every limb, and bleeding at every pore, and pour out our requests, not in those monstrous and tautological forms which degrade Man, but in those words which flow from the energetic feelings of the mind, or in those far more emphatic modes of expression, arising from the fulness of the soul, in comparison with which all words are weak

and puerile. Thus it should seem that there ought to be some specific and appropriate meaning annexed to the words "*success to his majesty's arms*," before we presume to make it a subject of address to the Deity.—One man means by it, securing the *Scheldt* to *Holland*, another *Flanders* for her barrier, a third supposes it includes *Hanover*, some mean by it distressing and weakening *France*, some dismembering and partitioning her, some imposing on her one kind of government, and some another, while others mean depriving her of all government, and annihilating her as a nation, and some include in the idea of "*success to his majesty's arms*" the eradicating certain principles wherever they are to be found, or wherever they can be traced. To approach the Deity in a form of words, to which such diversified ideas are annexed by the worshippers, they must have a strange taste for religious worship indeed who can approve. Did we worship *Jupiter*, it might be amusing to imagine, how merry the god would make himself with the discordant ideas of his votaries, and that he might humourously dismiss them, with assurances that he would grant their requests, when he could understand what they meant, and when they could agree amongst themselves on the subject.

We will admit, with Mr. *Burke*, that it is not fit, nor becoming the dignity of government, to let the people into the secret of what is the real object of the war; or, what is to be the result of success attending his majesty's arms; that it is sufficient for them to be told stories about atheists, republicans, and levellers; *French* principles and daggers; to be one moment told that the *French* are an object of our pity and contempt, and the next of terror and alarm. We will admit also with the *English Solomon*, *James 1st.* That "*It does not become subjects to pry into affairs of state.*" Yet, surely, something may be urged, if not in defence, yet in extenuation of our presumption; if, when his majesty orders us to pray to God for *success* on his arms, we humbly ask how they are to be employed, and what consequences are to result from the success we are to ask. For, as mischievous consequences have sometimes resulted from the success of a conquering army, we ought

to ask what object is to be attained? and what consequences are to result from the *success* we are ordered to ask for? And, before we presume to tell God the war is just and necessary, we ought to have satisfaction as to the specific nature of the war, and that such is its proper description. For, though it is alledged to be so by high authority, yet that authority is human, and consequently fallible. Under such circumstances, the question assumes a more serious form than even an affair of state. The king must now be considered, not as being *hurled* from his throne, but voluntarily descending from it, and leading his subjects into a presence where he and the meanest of them are on a perfect level. Under such circumstances, surely, we may be permitted to pause at the threshold, and respectfully ask for some evidence that the war be really of that description which we are required to affirm it to be in the presence of *Jehovah*. If, on enquiry, it appears to us not so to be, it then becomes our duty, not only to decline affirming it ourselves, but to urge others to make a similar inquiry, that they may thereby avoid the guilt of asserting a falsehood to God.

To assure God that his majesty's arms will be employed in just and necessary pursuits, may appear rather rash; because it is not quite certain that either intellectual or moral perfection necessarily appertains to royalty. The *glorious* and *immortal William* as readily told us, that it was just and necessary to dismember and partition the Spanish monarchy, as that *most excellent* prince *George Ist.* that it was just and necessary to make war with *Charles XII.* because *Charles* did not like to be deprived of Bremen and Verden.

We may be considered as having been engaged in one continual war ever since the revolution; the intervals of peace may be considered, merely as pauses to recover a little strength; and it is also observable that these pauses have generally been much execrated, and there has always been much clamour and discontent till we have again been suffered to embrace our hands in blood. In other nations the wars originate in the ambition of the prince, in this country the people have uniformly manifested a cannibal ferocity to sit down to the

bloody banquet. These bloody-banquets we have uniformly accompanied with fasts and thankgivings, and on all these occasions we have solemnly assured God that they were just: that any one of them was so, no one will now be hardy enough to undertake to prove. We have also as constantly besought God to give success to his majesty's arms, for that the cause in which we were engaged was not only *just* but *necessary*. If by necessary was meant that these wars were necessary for producing death, slavery, misery, and desolation, the assertion was true, but if it imported that they were necessary for our safety, or, even for our prosperity, it was demonstrably false, because we have constantly miscarried in the avowed objects for which every one of those wars was undertaken. For, if those wars were necessary for our safety, having miscarried in the objects of them, it follows, that we are now in a ruined situation; on the contrary; if we are now happy and glorious, it also follows, that we lied before God in affirming that those wars were necessary.

But here I am told that, in all I have said, I have proved nothing but my own ignorance. I am told that these things called fasts have no relation to religion; that nobody ever supposed so but a few old women, who were too blind to see, too deaf to hear, and too stupid to understand, what was passing in the world. I shall be told that calling on God is a mere pretext; that the prayers are meant for *Man* not for *God*. A political contrivance to inflame the minds of the people for particular purposes, and to give the clergy an opportunity of disseminating political mischief from their pulpits—Be it so—Admitting that a Swift might tell me that a *Fast* was a *Farce*, yet still I must contend that my objection is valid, because a *Farce* when it becomes profane ought to excite our horror. A fast certainly is a most convenient mode of disseminating opinions among the people. To call the weaver from his loom, and the husbandman from his plough; to command the hand of industry to stand still, and all business to be suspended through the nation; is of it self sufficient to alarm and to astonish. The fast necessarily becomes the topic of discourse, and the obscurest and remotest vil-

lage in the kingdom becomes the scene of political inquiry. The smith lays aside his hammer, and the taylor his goose; in vain they inquire of each other the cause of the alarm; obscure danger is the most terrific; and to the alehouse they adjourn, to drown their terror, in drinking church and king; there the curate and the excise man instruct the gaping multitude, and while pouring down their throats muddy ale, and poisonous gin, they are told, of the excellence of the constitution in church and state; of its danger from republicans and levellers, from french daggers and french principles, of king-killing, and atheism: paragraphs are read from Burke's Speeches, and from Horsley's Sermon: then all roaring out Rule Britannia, and God save the King, the night passes in praising the constitution, damning dissenters and execrating the French, interlarded with cursing, swearing, quarrelling, and obscenity.

Thus prepared for the fast day, they go to church, and their terrors are confirmed by royal authority. The curate from the desk reads what he had before retailed at the ale-house, and if able to tack together a few paragraphs from newspapers and 30th of January sermons, he ascends the pulpit, and ingratiates himself with the squire and rector, by making a flaming sermon against the *French*, and then finishes the fast-day with the jovial fare at the manor house.

If then fast days are attended with such extensive, such important consequences, they certainly will be resorted to—I mean not to contend, that statesmen ought not to adopt them. I only ask, on what principle a Christian can observe or countenance them in any shape or in any manner. Should he, while reading the gospel, and rejoicing in it as his present consolation, and his future hope, be told, that this was the only considerable country in Europe where that blessing could be freely enjoyed—that even here, the full enjoyment of his religion was only by sufferance, for that tremendous penal laws hung over him if he refused to conform to a particular religious cult, and though not now executed, yet that the clergy strenuously contended for their continuance, in hope that the period might arrive

in which the State might suffer them to be enforced—should he then be told that a revolution had taken place in a neighbouring nation, which not only must secure us effectually from any danger of returning persecution, but insured the free circulation of the gospel through Europe, that in this, the most important country in Europe, where the gospel had not been suffered to be printed for a century, liberty was now proclaimed to print, and to circulate it; and that Christians were allowed freely to meet together, and to defend and to propagate their faith without restraint.—should he be told, that this revolution had led another considerable nation to follow the example, and that from the universality of the french language, it might be expected that similar effects would be produced through Europe, How would he rejoice in this joyful news? How! he alone can tell, who knows the gospel of Christ to be the power of God unto salvation; nor would his joy be repressed on being told, that at the same time as Christians were permitted freely to defend the gospel, there existed no pains nor penalties to prevent others from opposing it. Again, let us suppose, that he was told that the sovereigns of Europe had combined together to subvert these governments, and that they had effectually succeeded as to one of them, but having failed as to the other, his majesty had thought proper to join in attacking it, at all parts, and had called on the people to pray for success to his arms in this attempt—Can it be thought that he would join with bishops and statesmen in supplicating for success?

But many tell us, that they do not mean to supplicate for success on the war, but that surely there can be no harm in meeting together, and confessing the crying sins of the nation, and supplicating God to avert his judgments from a sinful people. But, I should apprehend it to be criminal, to perform any religious act but from a conviction that *God* has commanded it. If we are Christians, we shall live under a continual sense of our sinful state, and be continually looking to him for pardon; but to do this once in ten or twenty years, because the king commands it, and because he chooses to exercise the royal prerogative of going to war, seems a

very strange fancy. But it seems we are not only to confess our own sins, but the crying sins of the nation, but what sort of confession that is, I am at a loss to understand. Of what use can it be of were we to confess, if the fact be so, that our laws are framed to produce a wicked and licentious populace, and to protect and foster such amazing systems of wickedness in all quarters of the globe, as the world never before witnessed !

That this nation is guilty of very great and very crying sins we will readily admit; and if, as the proclamation imports, his majesty is at last convinced of it, every quarter of the globe will have reason to rejoice, because at his hands the reformation must be looked for. Indeed, some people imagine, that the evidences of the abandonment of the great and crying sins of the nation are not very flattering, and perhaps a recent event indicates that our crying crimes are rather on the increase. The people of India had been by a charter from the kings of England assigned over as a property; and in consequence of this very modest, just, and reasonable assignment it has been said that as great a number of the inhabitants of India have been destroyed (I must not say murdered) as the whole population of England equals: at this very moment famine rages through the most fertile country in the world, it is said and a million of the inhabitants will fall a sacrifice to it, because we chose to take the cattle from the plough in the countries we had already conquered, to drag our artillery and army baggage to engage in new conquests. With these events before our eyes, this charter is just expired; and his majesty's minister now proposes its renewal; by which, in consideration of 500,000*l. per. annum*, part and portion of the money which is forcibly to be taken from the said people of *India*, which is to be paid into his majesty's Exchequer, the said people of *India* are to be assigned over by his majesty for the further term of twenty years; and the right of ———, and ———, twenty millions of people is to be retailed in *Change-alley* to the best bidders. If this be not deemed a crying sin, it might be necessary for the bishops to compose a *Homily*, to accompany the form of prayer, instructing us a little in the nature of

sin and of repentance. A great mathematician of old, said, that there was no royal way to geometry; so I should imagine that even bishops have not been able to discover a royal way to repentance.

But it seems, we are to beseech heaven to avert some impending calamity, which we are told hangs over us in consequence of these crying sins. What! are we to beseech heaven to avert its judgment, while we persist and glory in our crimes, and if we daily increase them in number and enormity? The housebreaker and footpad, certainly *wish* to escape punishment, but surely there never existed one so daringly impious, as to put up such a petition to heaven, while he grasped the fruits of his iniquity, and persisted in the continuance of his criminal pursuits. But what are these impending calamities and threatened judgments? I perceive them not, we seem to be gloriously triumphant in our pursuits: It may be asked if ever any nation spread such wide, such uniform misery and desolation through the globe, and if ever any people reaped such rich reward.

But, perhaps, I shall be told that, when his majesty and his ministers tell us to bewail the sins of the nation, they do not mean that they have committed any themselves; that, though *national* sins may seem to imply, sins committed by public authority, yet that good subjects should take it for granted, that the supreme head of the state is perfectly pure, and that all its acts are as pure as the source from whence they flow. It might indeed seem rather unreasonable that those who admonish us of our sins, should claim an exemption as to their own: but then it ought to be considered, that, as it may be proposed making a considerable addition to our foreign crimes, it may be requisite to balance the *foreign* by calling on us to diminish the *home* portion of our guilt.

But let it be considered that, whatever importance our pride may stimulate us to assume, yet if we have been, and still continue to be a curse to mankind, what aspiration can more properly arise from the heart, than that this island might be shaken to its center, and overwhelmed with the surrounding waves.

F I N I S.

These results are the result of the work of the
No. 1 and 2, 1880.

An Address to the People of Great Britain on the
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